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**CONFLICT TERMINATION IN COUNTERTERRORIST CAMPAIGNS**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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### **Abstract**

Operational commanders have historically struggled to align the process of conflict termination with long-term national strategic objectives. In the Global War on Terror, this challenge is exacerbated as operational planners must design counterterrorist campaigns that simultaneously consider the elusive nature of transnational terrorist organizations and the underlying causes for the creation of failed states that support such organizations. Cost-benefit analysis and negotiation, key concepts in theoretical conflict termination literature, are demonstrated to offer limited applicability to counterterrorist campaigns. Considerations for conflict termination in low intensity conflict are explored as a theoretical substitute for the post-conflict operations ongoing in Afghanistan. The limitations of joint doctrine in this area, although much improved in the last decade, are highlighted, with recommendations for increased emphasis on leverage in the post-conflict phase, when security and stabilization operations predominate. Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan is analyzed with due consideration for the national-strategic objective. The need to achieve leverage during post-conflict operations is considered paramount, and must be considered in conjunction with the primary objectives of the decisive operations phase.

*“...any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.”<sup>1</sup>*

*“We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. [T]his nation will act.”<sup>2</sup>*

*“America’s purpose...is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world.”<sup>3</sup>*

## **Introduction**

The President’s response to the 9/11 attacks represented a seminal change in America’s approach to war. The shift toward preemption as a key tenet of the United States National Security Strategy put the world on notice that this country would not passively await the next asymmetric attack but would seek out and engage enemy forces in anticipatory self-defense. Although preemption may take many forms (e.g. the targeting of terrorist leaders in Yemen by an armed Predator), military planners will be particularly challenged to design successful full-scale counterterrorist campaigns in the Global War on Terror. The key military objectives in such campaigns, regime change (elimination of the nation-state’s existing leadership) and the elimination of the terrorist organization resident in the nation-state, are unlimited in nature. Moreover, the unlimited national-strategic objective, presented in the moral context of a good

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. President, Address, “Address to Joint Session of Congress,” (20 September 2001); available from <http://www.patriotsource.com/wtc/president/010920b.html>; accessed 11 January 2004.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. President, Address, “Remarks at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy,” (1 June 2002); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/print/20020601-3.html>; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. President, Address, “State of the Union 2003,” (28 January 2003); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/print/20030128-19.html>; accessed 29 December 2003.

versus evil battle,<sup>4</sup> is the eventual elimination of global terrorism in order to make the world a safer place.<sup>5</sup>

Theoretical literature and joint doctrine does not specifically address preemptive counterterrorist campaigns. Operational planners will need to blend existing literature (both theoretical and doctrinal) with the tenets of operational art to design campaigns supporting a national-strategic objective of freedom from the tyranny of transnational terrorists. The challenge will reside in visualizing an end-state that achieves the leverage necessary to shift the primacy of effort from military to non-military sources of power, and to return security and stabilization responsibilities to the indigenous forces of the nation-state. Effectively, leverage and the desired end-state must be achieved in the post-hostility phase of the campaign so as prevent the emergence of a follow-on regime that could harbor terrorist organizations. As the first campaign<sup>6</sup> in the Global War on Terror, Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan offers insight into the difficulties faced by operational commanders as they strive to win the greater conflict.

### **War Termination- Theory and Doctrine**

Clausewitz articulated the concept that war is simply an extension of politics in another dimension. As such, military action should be undertaken only with a clear understanding of its eventual political goal.<sup>7</sup> In this context, war termination is more aptly described as a process of

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. President, Address, “Remarks at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy,” (1 June 2002); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/print/20020601-3.html>; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. President, Address, “State of the Union 2003,” (28 January 2003); available from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/print/20030128-19.html>; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan is considered a campaign instead of a major operation due to the national-strategic objective it is designed to achieve, the multi-national/inter-agency nature of the coalition, the synchronization of multiple land, air, maritime and non-military operations, and the duration of time and size of the battlespace over which the campaign has been conducted.

<sup>7</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 579.

transitioning from the use of primarily military power back to a renewed focus on the diplomatic, economic, and informational aspects of national power in order to achieve the stated political goal. Military power alone will rarely, if ever, attain this goal by itself. The non-military instruments of national power previously failed to achieve the political goal; as a result national leaders decided to initiate military operations. As an option of last resort, “military power is exerted to control the situation,”<sup>8</sup> in order to restore the conditions that will facilitate a return to the other elements of national power. The diplomatic, informational and economic aspects of power do not cease to function during the conflict; rather their influence becomes muted as hostilities commence (but continues nonetheless).

The tension present between the military and non-military elements of national power prevent a victorious nation-state from simply reverting back to the non-military instruments once a favorable military solution has been achieved.<sup>9</sup> Exit strategy proponents treat war termination as a specific event: the military has successfully executed combat operations, and forces should therefore redeploy. Whether in combat operations or in military operations other than war (MOOTW), such a clear-cut period is rarely, if ever, realized. Instead, military forces gradually shift from a supported to a supporting role, effectively assisting the non-military sources of power (diplomatic, informational, economic) that have been at work *continuously* throughout the conflict, and now return to the fore as primary instruments of power.

War termination is thus a transitory process that must ensue to *capitalize* on the conditions created by military action, and should ideally result in an enduring solution that is palatable to both belligerents. “War termination strategies must work at the interface between grand strategy [national strategy] and military strategy, where military art meets political constraint. It is a most

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<sup>8</sup> Walter Wojdakowski, “Conflict Termination: Integrating the Elements of Power in Today’s Changing World,” (USAWC Military Studies Program Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 15 April 1993), 9.

difficult juncture.”<sup>10</sup> It is incumbent upon operational planners to recognize this interface and design their campaigns accordingly. Failing this, operational commanders can conceivably win a decisive military victory but fail to achieve a stated national objective(s). Desert Storm represents such a case where the decisive military victory did not result in the achievement of an enduring political objective.<sup>11</sup>

Against the specter of nuclear war, war termination theorists have attempted to develop a coherent rational model for war termination strategy that focuses primarily on cost analysis and negotiation. Various rational models have been proposed that employ a cost-benefit analysis or a cost-comparison analysis. The cost-benefit analysis is an internal process that each belligerent continuously undertakes to weigh the merits of its strategic objective against the costs already incurred, *and* the expected costs to be incurred in continuing the struggle. Cost-benefit analysis is focused on military victory; as such the cost to the enemy is not a primary consideration (attrition objectives notwithstanding).<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz captured the essence of this approach in his classic statement:

*“As war is no act of blind passion, but it is dominated by the political object, therefore the value of that object determines the measure of sacrifices by which it is to be purchased...As soon, therefore, as the required outlay becomes so great as that the political object is no longer equal in value, the object must be given up, and peace will be the result.”<sup>13</sup>*

Conversely, in limited warfare, or when negotiations are anticipated, nation-states often conduct a cost-comparison analysis. In this approach, disagreement costs become the dominant concern. Belligerents assess the relative costs of continuing the conflict, and seek to make the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup> Bruce Bade, “War Termination: Why Don’t We Plan For It?” in *Essays on Strategy XII* ed. John N. Petrie, (Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1994), 207.

<sup>11</sup> Emmett M. Schaill, “Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?” (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 21 May 1998), 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> John Schwanz, “War Termination: The Application of Operational Art to Negotiating Peace” (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1996), 4-5.

costs higher for one's opponent than for oneself. Belligerents successful in manipulating the disagreement cost ratio in their favor should (in the rational model) be able to induce negotiations and achieve a favorable settlement to the conflict.<sup>14</sup>

Despite its usefulness as a heuristic model, Handel deems “the rational calculation of a war’s conclusion [to be] virtually impossible.”<sup>15</sup> Any cost analysis requires perfect understanding of the objectives and values of both sides, and a perfect knowledge of the military power, present and future, of both belligerents. This is rarely possible, particularly in the asymmetric nature of conflict that characterizes the Global War on Terror. Moreover, leaders cannot always be expected to act in a rational manner, another critical supposition for the rational approach. The Global War on Terror is an ideological, value-based clash. As such, U.S. military leaders cannot expect extremist regimes and non-state actors such as transnational terrorists to act in a rational and calculated manner.

In limited war scenarios, negotiation could potentially occur in concert with combat operations or following a cessation, temporary or permanent, of hostilities. As a specific example of the former case, Korean Conflict negotiations lasted for over two years, during which time the ongoing combat operations significantly influenced by the negotiations.<sup>16</sup> The salient point however is that both sides had legitimate power bases that could speak for their respective nation-states (or international coalitions). “In order for war termination to occur, both sides must preserve...coherent leaderships.”<sup>17</sup> With a stated military objective of regime change, operational commanders will have little opportunity to shape the battlefield for negotiation, and, by

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<sup>13</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 125.

<sup>14</sup> Paul R. Pillar, *Negotiating Peace: War Termination As a Bargaining Process*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 144-146.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Handel, *War Termination – A Critical Survey* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1978), 29.

<sup>16</sup> John Schwanz, “War Termination: The Application of Operational Art to Negotiating Peace”, 13-14.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen J. Cimbala, “The Endgame and War” In *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion, and War*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 9.

necessity, will determine conflict termination and the subsequent transition to post-hostility operations unilaterally.

Post-conflict operations, characterized by security and stabilization efforts, compare favorably with low-intensity conflict. War termination in low-intensity conflict, as a theoretical substitute for post-conflict operations, recognizes that termination will only be achieved by the full spectrum of national power, of which the military is but one element. The success of military transition operations will be “measured in decreasing requests for U.S. assistance” by the host nation’s forces.<sup>18</sup> In essence, Killebrew postulates that ground forces engaged in low-intensity conflict will have achieved the desired military end-state when the responsibility for security and stabilization can be returned to host nation forces.<sup>19</sup> The logic of this theoretical approach is applicable for the post-conflict operations ongoing in Afghanistan.

Low-intensity conflict termination theory notwithstanding, the limitations inherent in the rational approach to war termination, both with respect to cost analysis and negotiation, exacerbate the challenges faced by operational planners in the War on Terror. Transnational terrorist organizations, waging a holy jihad in support of fundamentalist ideological beliefs, have not, and will not, act in a rational manner with respect to either a cost-benefit or cost-comparison analysis. Negotiation is not an option with these entities; the United States is essentially engaged in a total war with this foe. Simultaneously, the destruction of regimes that provide safe harbor to these organizations removes any coherent leadership with which to negotiate at the nation-state level. The resulting vacuum in national leadership, if not addressed, will continue to foster the environment which allowed terrorist organizations to flourish initially. The need to focus on

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<sup>18</sup> Robert B. Killebrew, “The Role of Ground Forces in Conflict Termination” In *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion, and War*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 135.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

achieving leverage in the post-conflict phase in order to attain the desired military end-state becomes apparent when one considers that two key facets of rational war termination models, cost-comparison and negotiation, do not exist in the Global War on Terror.

United States military doctrine places significant emphasis on transition and conflict termination, and has improved significantly in the last decade.<sup>20</sup> Operational commanders in the first Gulf War may have recognized the need for some semblance of end-state but had little in the way of doctrine to assist with their planning.<sup>21</sup> The latest joint publications emphasize the need to design campaigns with due consideration for conflict termination and transition, and the importance of a military end-state related to the strategic objective. Joint Publication 3.0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, states “U.S. forces must be dominant in the final stages of an armed conflict by achieving the leverage sufficient to impose a lasting solution.”<sup>22</sup> In a later section, the publication also charges operational commanders with “determining the strategic end-state and the supporting military conditions.”<sup>23</sup> Additionally, Joint Publication 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, “requires the JFC to focus on strategic objectives that may be several operational steps removed from current activities,”<sup>24</sup> The publication also stresses conflict termination as a key to campaign planning.<sup>25</sup>

Post-conflict activities are an inevitable component of any limited military conflict. The successful transition away from the primacy of military means is paramount to achieving enduring political objectives. Joint Publication 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, acknowledges this but fails to comprehensively address the process. Four of its

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<sup>20</sup> Emmett M. Schaill, “Planning and End State: Has Doctrine Answered the Need?” (School of Advanced Military Studies Monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 21 May 1998), 52.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 3-0 (Washington, D.C., 2001), I-10.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., III-2.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*. Joint Publication 5-00.1 (Washington, D.C., 2002), vii.

paragraphs broadly touch on transition considerations, and planners are reminded, “A commander’s campaign plan should include a transition from wartime operation to MOOTW.”<sup>26</sup> Continued pursuit of political objectives is also mentioned, and five key activities are identified: 1) transition to civil authority; 2) support to truce negotiations; 3) civil affairs support to reestablish civil government; 4) psychological operations to foster continued peaceful relations; 5) continuing logistics support.<sup>27</sup> Surprisingly, there is no direct mention of counter-insurgency operations or peace enforcement operations when specifically addressing transition or termination considerations. Without question, operational commanders will need to execute these activities in any campaign that has regime change as a primary operational objective. The ongoing operations in Afghanistan aptly demonstrate this fact.<sup>28</sup> Joint Publication 3-07 also provides overarching guidance regarding the importance of linking military operations with national strategy, “JFCs should, therefore, translate their political guidance into appropriate military objectives through a rigorous and continuous mission and threat analysis.”<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps most insightfully, Joint Publication 3-57, *Civil-Military Operations*, stresses the need to move beyond the military end-state, and emphasizes that operational planning must take place in support of war termination and the transition to the post-conflict phase of a limited war. This document most clearly bridges major combat and post-conflict operations stating, “Transition planning must be initiated during the initial phases of operation planning...plan for transition when planning for intervention.”<sup>30</sup> Transition and termination are considered separately, an

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., III-4-5.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington, D.C., 1995), IV-11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> In the context of this monograph, Operation Iraqi Freedom is not viewed as an exclusive counterterrorist campaign. Nevertheless, current operations in this country also demonstrate this fact.

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, D.C., 1995), II-2.

<sup>30</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Civil-Military Operations*, Joint Publication 3-57 (Washington, D.C., 2001), III-34.

important distinction for the operational planners to understand, with separate checklists for each provided. Joint Publication 3-57 highlights the concepts and considerations most applicable to the ongoing operations in Afghanistan.

Despite the significant increase in doctrinal literature, planners today can still not avail themselves of a coherent, defined process by which to achieve leverage and the desired military end-state. Joint publications clearly stipulate the importance of such items but do not explicitly state how to attain these same conditions. Across the spectrum of conflict, it may simply be too difficult to provide a “checklist” of tasks that will result in the leverage needed to create the conditions supporting the desired military end-state. Although Joint Publication 3.0 declares “leverage as the centerpiece of operational art,”<sup>31</sup> the body of joint publications seldom mentions the term and offers little insight into what exactly leverage is, or how it can be obtained during either combat operations or post-conflict operations.

Broad emphasis on such principles and concepts may be the best that doctrinal publications can provide to operational staffs. Nevertheless, operational commanders and their staffs should strive to specifically define what “leverage” will be *during each phase of the campaign*, and to specifically link this leverage to the conditions that must be established to create the desired military end-state supporting, in turn, the long-term political goal.

### **Operation Enduring Freedom**

The Global War on Terror is an ideological struggle with the unlimited national-strategic objective of eliminating the transnational terrorist threat. Within this global conflict, each counterterrorist campaign such as Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan is simultaneously a limited conflict and an unlimited conflict. The limited conflict is with the nation-state itself, specifically the regime in power. The government in question has the option of acquiescing to

U.S. demands or facing their imminent removal from power. Once hostilities commence, the military objective is regime change. The unlimited conflict is with the terrorist organization(s) that have established a base of operations within the nation-state. At a minimum, U.S. forces must deny the terrorist organization's ability to operate within the nation-state. Eventually however, U.S. forces must also capture or eliminate both terrorist leadership and terrorist foot-soldiers so that they cannot shift their base of operations and continue their asymmetric conflict.

In a conventional military confrontation with either entity, victory is a foregone conclusion. U.S. military forces have superior training and technology that far outstrip any potential adversaries, and if applied decisively, will achieve a quick victory during major combat operations. The military campaigns in both Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate this fact explicitly. Yet, it is eminently possible to win such campaigns in a military sense but to lose the Global War on Terror by failing to achieve the national-strategic objective. The decapitation of a nation-state's leadership creates a civil government vacuum that allows terrorists and bandits to operate at will. Moreover, a country's descent into anarchy could generate the despair that will entice more individuals to join criminal and terrorist organizations. In recognition of this potential, the operational design of a campaign in the Global War on Terror should focus on a military end-state in which the conditions have been created that allow security operations to transfer to indigenous forces. One can infer that these conditions include a measurable level of stability and peace throughout the country, and the creation of a well-trained and appropriately-sized indigenous security force. Planners must thus focus on creating these conditions, in effect achieving the decisive leverage, during post-conflict operations rather than during major combat operations.

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<sup>31</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Publication 3-0* (Washington, D.C., 2001), III-14.

Against the backdrop of the 9/11 attacks, U.S. Central Command planners developed the concept for Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan with a significant time constraint and without the benefit of an existing operational plan. The stark reality of that horrific day removed any vagueness on the part of political leaders as President Bush concisely declared the national-strategic objective during his post-9/11 address to Congress:

*“Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”<sup>32</sup>*

The President also defined the theater-strategic objectives specific to the nation’s first counterterrorist campaign:

*“...the United States of America makes the following demands on the Taliban: Deliver...all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan...”<sup>33</sup>*

With this clear guidance, General Franks and his staff developed the operational concept of the campaign. In hindsight, the identified strategic center of gravity appears to have been the will to fight as represented by the leadership of the two organizations. With further analysis, one can infer that the identified operational centers of gravity for the Taliban regime included the limited air defense system and the strongholds of conventional forces located in Kabul, Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif. For al Qaeda, the identified operational centers of gravity appear to have been the primary terrorist bases (e.g. Tora Bora). Recognizing the limited capability of these forces, U.S Central Command planners chose to directly target the strategic and operational centers of gravity.<sup>34</sup>

The design of the campaign that evolved between the 9/11 attacks and the commencement of hostilities on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2002 reflected the limited operational reach that U.S. forces possessed

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<sup>32</sup> U.S. President, Address, “Address to Joint Session of Congress,” (20 September 2001); available from <http://www.patriotsource.com/wtc/president/010920b.html>; accessed 11 January 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

at the time. Lacking pre-existing basing agreements and/or significant diplomatic/military relations with bordering nations, U.S Central Command did not have the logistical infrastructure to deploy large numbers of conventional forces into theater in a timely fashion. This dilemma reflected the immature nature of the theater of operations, and was a direct by-product of the operational factors of time and force. Accordingly, planners leveraged the complementary capabilities of special operations forces (SOF) personnel (to included non-DOD para-military personnel) with the precision engagement capability of U.S. airpower (both Air Force strategic air assets and Navy tactical air assets) to directly strike the aforementioned centers of gravity. Special Operations Forces personnel were embedded with various opposition forces to overcome the lack of conventional U.S. forces in the conflict. The decision to use these surrogate forces was crucial to the success of combat operations but has since worked in counterpoint to the long-term objective of creating a central government with a national army.<sup>35</sup>

The combat phase of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan was an unqualified success. U.S. Central Command executed the campaign in sequential fashion, initially using airpower to target the regime's limited air defense capabilities and its command and control nodes in the vicinity of Kabul. During this opening stage, U.S. Central Command did not allocate significant combat power to the frontlines where the United Front (Northern Alliance and other opposition groups) opposed the Taliban strongholds in the north. Following this initial phase, U.S Central Command brought decisive power, in the form of United Front fighters (assisted by special operation forces) and precision air strikes, to bear against Taliban and al Qaeda strongholds in the north. The fall of Mazar-e-Sharif on November 9<sup>th</sup> signaled the rapid demise of the regime. The Taliban effectively ceased to exist with the fall of Kabul (November 13<sup>th</sup>). The subsequent

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<sup>34</sup> Milan Vego, "What Can We Learn From Enduring Freedom?" *Proceedings*, July 2002, 29.

fall of the remaining northern stronghold, Kunduz (November 24<sup>th</sup>), and the southern stronghold, Kandahar (December 7<sup>th</sup>), soon followed. Within two months of the commencement of hostilities, U.S. Central Command had achieved the first of its military objectives – the removal of the Taliban regime.<sup>36</sup>

Actions against al Qaeda were also successful, albeit to a lesser degree. Following the fall of the Taliban and concurrent with the installation of a provisional government, U.S. Central Command continued (and continues) to target terrorist leadership, forces and strongholds in a series of major and minor tactical actions (e.g. Operation Anaconda). U.S. forces achieved a limited objective- the terrorist organization ceased to function *within* Afghanistan<sup>37</sup> – yet failed to achieve the unlimited strategic objective, namely the elimination or capture of al Qaeda’s senior leadership.<sup>38</sup> Over two years after the campaign’s start, al Qaeda remnants are regrouping within Afghanistan, a potential reversal of the initial military success. This situation reflects the initial focus on conventional military objectives without a concomitant consideration for the strategic objective of creating a secure, stable Afghanistan that does not provide a safe haven for terrorist organizations.

U.S. Central Command did, however, recognize the duality of the counterterrorist campaign being waged. Concurrent with the combat operations, U.S. forces executed large-scale humanitarian operations to provide succor to the Afghani people. On the campaign’s opening night (October 7<sup>th</sup>), strategic lift assets air dropped 37,000 daily rations. By the year’s end, coalition forces had delivered over 575,000 metric tons of food. U.S. Central Command, acting

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<sup>35</sup> Anthony Davis, “Afghan Regional Powers Test Kabul in Run-up to Loya Jirga,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* 14, no. 6:2-4, June 2002 [journal online]; available from <http://jir.janes.com>; Internet; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>36</sup> Anthony Davis, “How the Afghan War Was Won,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review* 14, no. 2:1-5, February 2002 [journal online]; available from <http://jir.janes.com>; Internet; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>37</sup> Tommy R. Franks, quoted in “Operation Enduring Freedom,” (U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing: February 7, 2002), 5.

<sup>38</sup> Milan Vego, “What Can We Learn From Enduring Freedom?” *Proceedings*, July 2002, 29.

in concert with other government entities and private organizations, worked diligently to improve Afghanistan's national infrastructure, as evidenced by the endeavor to rebuild the Kabul-Kandahar-Herat highway.<sup>39</sup> The international security force (ISAF) in Kabul was established soon after the fall of the Taliban regime and represented a direct attempt to establish security and stability within the capital. Accompanying the establishment of ISAF, coalition countries began training various elements of the Afghan National Army, an ongoing, long-term effort. Kabul notwithstanding, the rest of Afghanistan struggles to contend with al Qaeda and Taliban remnants, increased banditry and narcotics trafficking, and the ever-present threat of tribal warfare- none of which can be effectively countered by the present coalition force-structure.<sup>40</sup>

U.S. Central Command planners designed a campaign that rapidly and decisively achieved the operational objectives but has not yet created the conditions for an enduring success. At the close of major combat operations, represented by the fall of Kandahar on December 7<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. did not possess the leverage needed to create a secure, stable environment for the Afghan people. Lacking the logistical infrastructure and political will to introduce an occupying force into the country, staff planners did not adequately assess the operational factors of space and force in the context of post-conflict operations. Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership figures, as well as large numbers of foot soldiers, slipped into Pakistan because U.S. did not have sufficient forces present to seal the border.

Moreover, the Northern Alliance and other provincial forces used to topple the Taliban have now become a part of the broader strategic problem. As surrogates for conventional U.S. forces,

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<sup>39</sup> U.S. European Command. "Operation Enduring Freedom – One Year of Accomplishments," [information online]; available from [http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/Operations/oef/operation\\_enduring\\_freedom](http://www.eucom.mil/Directorates/ECPA/Operations/oef/operation_enduring_freedom); Internet; accessed 29 December 2003.

these militias were crucial to achieving U.S. Central Command's military objectives in a timely fashion for they [the militias] offered planners a means to overcome the immature nature of the theater. However, at a strategic level, these groups have self-interests that are not necessarily aligned with the U.S. political objective of a secure, stable Afghanistan, ruled by a central government and protected by a national army. Both militarily and diplomatically, U.S. personnel must maintain a fine balance between abandoning these erstwhile allies and enticing them to recognize the legitimacy of a centralized government.<sup>41</sup> If the U.S. fails to manage this situation, the country could fall back into the anarchy that gave rise to the Taliban regime initially.<sup>42</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Contemporary literature on war termination does not adequately address the challenges inherent in executing counterterrorist campaigns as part of the Global War on Terror; in particular the ability of military forces to achieve a desired military end-state during post-conflict operations. The preponderance of literature focuses on limited war using rational models based upon cost analysis and negotiation. Although Afghanistan was a limited campaign, the actors, both state (Taliban) and non-state (al Qaeda), whom the U.S. faced could not be expected to act in a rational manner. Moreover, regime change as a stated military objective eliminated the possibility of negotiation being a desired result of decisive military action. The closest parallel to the situation faced in Afghanistan is reflected in conflict termination considerations for low-intensity conflict, which postulates that the goal of U.S. forces in low-intensity conflict should be to create the conditions whereby responsibility for security and stability operations can be

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<sup>40</sup> Anthony Davis, "Recent Violence Obscures Deeper Threats for Afghanistan," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 14, no. 10:1-5, February 2002 [journal online]; available from <http://jir.janes.com>; Internet; accessed 29 December 2003.

<sup>41</sup> Anthony Davis, "Afghan Regional Powers Test Kabul in Run-up to Loya Jirga," *Jane's Intelligence Review* 14, no. 6:4.

<sup>42</sup> "Operation Enduring Freedom," (U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing: February 7, 2002), 5-9.

returned to the nation-state's indigenous forces.<sup>43</sup> This theoretical framework captures the essence of the challenge inherent in Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan, with the additional caveat that the United States, having removed the Taliban government, has a moral responsibility to support the development of a legitimate government that can address the basic needs of the Afghan people. The ultimate success or failure of Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan will be judged according to this criterion.

Although significantly improved, joint doctrine should be updated to reflect the importance of post-conflict operations in determining a desired military end-state that will result in the attainment of the overarching political objective. A commensurate focus on transition to, and eventual termination of, *post-conflict operations*, should accompany the current emphasis on conflict termination of decisive operations. The concept of leverage must be expanded to reflect more than simply the relative superiority of U.S. forces at the decisive point in time where military objectives are attained. Defining leverage during post-conflict operations will greatly assist operational staffs in the design of counterterrorist campaigns. In turn, this will reinforce the notion that conflict termination, in its entirety, is a transition process by which military forces shift from a focus on decisive operations (in which the military is the primary element of national power) to a focus on security and stabilization operations (in which the military is a supporting element of national power).

The operational design of counterterrorist campaigns must focus on post-conflict operations as well, and recognize that the identified military objectives of the decisive (major combat) operations phase are only interim objectives with respect to the strategic end-state. In a counterterrorist campaign, a more appropriate strategic center of gravity might be the conditions

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<sup>43</sup> Robert B. Killebrew, "The Role of Ground Forces in Conflict Termination" In *Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion, and War*, ed. Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn Boulder: Westview Press,

of anarchy and internal strife that permit a transnational terrorist organization to establish a base of operations in a nation-state. In countries such as Sudan or Somalia, these conditions may exist because the central government cannot effectively control all of its territory, or because no central government exists at all. In the specific case of Afghanistan, the anarchy and strife of the early to mid-1990s allowed terrorist elements to flourish, and eventually gave rise to a tyrannical extremist regime that supported, and received support from, al Qaeda. In this light, the operational factors of space and force take on a new dimension. Commanders may not be able to achieve the conditions (leverage) needed during the security and stabilization operations that predominate the post-conflict phase without introducing large concentrations of forces to the theater. This requirement may negate the force multiplier effect that accompanies the U.S. technological superiority in sensors, weapons, and information management; a multiplier effect that was used so successfully during decisive combat operations in Afghanistan.

The seamless transition to post-conflict operations will also be crucial to capitalizing on the conditions obtained during combat operations. In many cases, the missions that characterize post-conflict operations will be ongoing throughout the combat phase, yet must quickly and decisively come to the fore in the eventual transition. Commanders must ensure this transition is thoroughly planned and precisely synchronized so as to offer immediate security to the nation-state's populace in a restrained and legitimate manner. This is the essence of capitalization whereby the operational commander transforms the favorable conditions established during major combat operations into the leverage needed during post-conflict operations.

The difficulties faced in Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan will be present in future counterterrorist campaigns. The existence of transnational terrorist organizations in such countries is a symptom but not the root cause of these states' problems. Military planners must

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1987), 133-135.

design operational plans that concurrently treat the symptom – transnational terrorist organizations – with decisive combat power, and address the root causes – anarchy and internal strife – with effective security and stabilization operations (in conjunction with the non-military instruments of national power). The United States cannot hope to win the Global War on Terror without this dual approach to counterterrorist campaigns.

*“Coalition forces continue to deny anti-coalition elements’ sanctuary...accomplished through active combat patrolling ...in order to promote stability, enhance the legitimacy of the Interim-Transitional Government of Afghanistan, and prevent the re-emergence of terrorism.”<sup>44</sup>*

*“We will remain engaged in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future.”<sup>45</sup>*

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<sup>44</sup> Tommy R. Franks, quoted in “Statement of General Tommy R. Franks, Former Commander, U.S. Central Command,” (U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing: July 9, 2003), 6.

<sup>45</sup> Tommy R. Franks, quoted in “Operation Enduring Freedom,” (U.S. Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing: February 7, 2002), 6.

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